



REAL CLEVER

IDEAS & SOLUTIONS

Hints and Tips to Save You
Effort, Time and Money



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SOLUTIONS & IDEAS

Tips and Tricks to Save You Time and Money

Naya Lizardo

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Introduction

Are you exhausted by the great deal of effort and money required to take care of your home, car, and everything else in your busy life? Are you looking for ideas and solutions to make your home and life run a little smoother? This book is full of clever ideas, solutions, and inspiration to help you do just that.

Whether you are looking for ways to save money on your next trip, tackling a tough stain, embarking on some deep cleaning, or looking for simple ways to pamper yourself, this book will show you how.

Here you will find more than a hundred simple and effective solutions that will save you time and money so you can do more of the things you love. These clever tips and tricks have been tried and tested by moms, grandmothers, housekeepers, savvy travelers and other clever people who also wanted to solve problems, save money and just make their lives easier.

Some of the tips and ideas covered in the book have been around for a long time and may be familiar to you, but many others will be little known gems that will surprise and amaze you. I hope that you enjoy these clever ideas and that they save you time, money and effort, making *your life a little easier*.



Chapter 1: Cooking Solutions

Whether you are just starting out in the kitchen and need help rescuing a ruined dish, or you are an experienced chef looking for tips and ideas to improve your cooking, this chapter has some smart advice and ideas that we hope make cooking a more fun and fulfilling experience for you! You'll be a better, smarter cook with these clever tips. Bon Appetit!



Bake Potatoes Faster

Whether topped with a scoop sour cream or a simple pat of butter, baked potatoes are a favorite no-fuss meal. However, many find that baking potatoes just takes too long. There's a easy way to cut the baking time in half. Wash the potatoes and poke a few holes in them with a fork. Put the potatoes in hot water and let them stand for 10 minutes. They will require about half the time to bake.

Better Tasting Corn

For delicious tasting corn on the cob, add a tablespoon of sugar to the boiling water. The sugar will help bring out the corn's natural sweetness.

Chill Iced Tea with Fruit

Instead of ice cubes to chill your iced tea or lemonade, which can dilute your drink, try frozen fruit instead. The frozen fruit will keep the drink cold without adding excess water and will add a nice subtle flavor to your drink.

Crisp Wilted Lettuce

If your lettuce got a little wilted, don't throw it out. You can crisp wilted lettuce by submerging it in a bowl of ice cold water and adding a couple of spoonful of cider vinegar. Let it stand for 10 to 15 minutes.

Cut Cakes with Dental Floss

Cut and dish out cake quickly and easily. Unscented dental floss will cut a cake easier and faster than a knife. Hold a long piece of floss between your fingers, press it down across the cake to slice it through.

Easily Peel Boiled Eggs

When making hard-boiled eggs, add a little bit of vinegar to the water. The vinegar will soften the eggshells and make peeling the eggs much easier.

Frozen Cubes of Flavor

Pour leftover wine into an ice tray and freeze. This way you will always have easy-to-use, single serving wine flavoring on hand for soups, stews, sauces and other cooking uses.

Frost-Free Ice Cream

To prevent unappealing frosty crystals from forming on your favorite ice cream, store the container in a large Ziploc bag. This will keep the ice cream as smooth and soft as when you first bought it.

Fresh Herbs All Year Round

Preserve the fresh taste of your herbs by freezing them in oil. Rinse your herbs thoroughly, cut off the long stems on herbs like cilantro or parsley. Finely chop your fresh herbs and mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of olive oil to 1 cup of chopped herbs. Put mixture in a zip-lock freezer bag. Flatten and distribute the mixture evenly to get a thin layer. Freeze flat. Once frozen, you'll be able to break off pieces as needed. For the freshest taste, be sure to use within 6 months.

Get More Juice from Lemons

Before cutting the lemon, place it in pan with water and bring to a boil. You will be surprised; you'll be able to get almost double the juice from it when you warm it up.

Hard Boiled Eggs in the Oven

Cooking a dozen or more perfect hard boiled at once couldn't be easier with this hands-off method. Preheat your oven to 325-350 (depending on your oven). Place the eggs in a muffin pan to prevent them from rolling around and bake them for 30 minutes. Remove the eggs and place them in cold water to stop the cooking process. Let them sit in the cold water for a few minutes and then peel. The baked eggs will easier to peel and have a creamier texture. Enjoy!

Ice Cold Beer in 10 Minutes

You can make your canned or bottled drinks ice cold in just a few short minutes. Place your bottles or cans in a container (preferably an ice chest). Cover them with plenty of ice, add sufficient water to cover them completely, and top off the ice with plenty of salt (half a cup for 6 beers). In 10 to 15 minutes you will have ice cold drinks.

When salt is added to water it lowers the temperature at which that water will freeze. The more salt the water contains, the lower its freezing point will be. When you add salt, the water is cooling to temperatures below zero while still staying liquid. That is why it chills the bottles much faster than regular ice and water.

Keep Dairies Fresh

Store sealed yogurt, sour cream, and cottage cheese upside down; this will make them last up to one week longer!

Keep Produce Fresh

Line your vegetable drawer with paper towels so your vegetables will stay fresher longer. The paper towels absorb the moisture that causes your vegetables to rot. It will also make cleaning the much bins easier.

Make Dumpling Wrappers with White Bread

Instead of buying dumpling dough or having to make them from scratch, you can easily make dumpling wrappers with soft white bread instead. Start by cutting off the crusts, flatten the bread with a rolling pin, then stuff, fold, pinch, and cook them same way you would regular dumpling wrappers.

Mold-Free Berries

Berries are quite delicate and can get moldy very quickly. It can be quite disappointing to bring home fresh tasty berries only to find them covered in mold just a few days later. If you want your berries to last a week or more, rinse them with vinegar to keep them from getting moldy and mushy. Prepare a mixture of one part vinegar and ten parts water. Place the berries in the mixture and swirl them around. Drain, rinse, and store them in the fridge. The vinegar destroys the mold spores and bacteria that might be on the surface of the fruit.

No-Mess Bacon

Layer two paper towels on a flat plate. Lay slices of bacon side by side on the paper towels. Cover with two more paper towels. Place in the microwave and cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Check for crispiness at one minute intervals. When ready, toss the towels for easy clean-up.

Pipe Frosting with Ziploc Bags

Snip off the corner of a Ziploc bag, fill with frosting, and use it to pipe your frosting! You can also fill it with pancake batter and make fun shaped pancakes.

Revive Crystallized Honey

To bring honey back to its smooth and drizzly state, place the container in a bowl of hot water for about 5 minutes.

Roast Chicken with Legs Facing Back

The legs of the chicken take the longest time to cook. Since the back corners of the oven get the hottest, it will ensure that they are cooked evenly with the rest of the chicken.

Restore Milk Freshness

If your milk has just started to turn sour, pour in a pinch of baking soda to restore freshness.

Ripen Peaches Quickly

If your peaches are too hard and unripe, and you don't want to wait an eternity for them ripen, you can ripen them quickly by placing them in a brown paper bag with an apple. Your peaches will be juicy and ready to eat in about 3 days.

Soften Brown Sugar

As moisture evaporates, brown sugar can become hard over time. You can easily add moisture back by placing the open sugar bag in a microwave with a cup of water next to it and zapping it for 2 minutes.

Use Cookie Cutters for Pancakes

Give your kids (or spouse) a special Sunday morning treat by making fun shaped pancakes. Whip up a batch of your favorite pancake recipe and heat up the griddle or frying pan. Place the metal cookie cutters on the hot griddle and spray the insides with cooking spray. Pour the batter into the cookie cutters. Remove the cookie cutters with tongs before flipping the pancake.

Vegetable Ice Cubes

Instead of throwing out your leftover vegetables, puree them in a blender and pour them into ice cube trays. Use them to flavor stews or soups.



Even the most experienced cooks can make mistakes in the kitchen, so don't beat yourself up or throw that dish out. Whether you over-salted or overcooked your dish, you can use some simple techniques and ingredients to hide your mistake and balance out the flavors.

Add Moisture Back to Overcooked Meat

Did you overcook your meat and now it's a little dry? To remedy this, pour the drippings into a pan, add 1 or 2 cups of stock, and bring it to a boil. Cut the meat in smaller portions and place it in a roasting pan or baking dish. Add the stock mixture and cover it with a lid or foil. Place it in a warm oven for about five minutes. The meat should regain some of its moisture.

Burnt Gravy

If you accidentally burnt your gravy, just pour it into a clean pan and continue cooking it. Adding a little sugar will help cancel out the burned taste.

Curb the Acidic Bite

Is your sauce or dressing too acidic? Add a small pinch of baking soda to neutralize the sting without adding unwanted flavor.

Fix Mushy Pasta

If you've overcooked your pasta, don't worry, it's not the end of the world. You can get that "al dente" feel back by quickly sautéing it in a pan with a little olive oil.

Over-Baked Cookies

Are your cookies not as soft as you intended? Put them in a plastic container with a slice of bread and leave them for about 24 hours. The cookies will absorb the moisture from the bread and get soft and gooey. Putting them in the microwave for about 5 seconds can also do the trick.

Over-Salted Food

You can add a little bit of sugar or vinegar to balance out the brine of a dish that has been over-salted. If you are making a soup, drop in a peeled cut potato and it will absorb the excess salt.

Overly Sweet Foods

Cut the sweetness in over sugared foods by adding a squeeze of lemon or a few drops of vinegar.

Over Greasy Stew or Sauce

When making a soup, sauce, or casserole that ends up too greasy or fatty, drop in an ice cube. The ice cube will attract the fat, which you can then scoop out.

Popcorn That Won't Pop

If your popcorn kernels won't pop, it's likely because they dried out. You need to add moisture back. Soak the kernels in water for a few minutes, drain and pat them dry with a paper towel.



Chapter 2: Cleaning Solutions

A clean and well-kept home is a place where you can truly relax and feel happy. Your home can be a place that makes you forget the stress and hard work of the day. However, keeping your home clean and tidy usually requires good deal of time, money, and effort.

Here are a few clever tips and tricks that will help you save money and reduce both the time and effort required to keep your house clean. They are easy and simple and will make your home more pleasant and your life much easier.



Keeping your kitchen clean isn't exactly fun, but it doesn't have to be drudgery either. Here is a great collection of clever tips and hints that will help make cleaning your kitchen easier and more efficient. Tackle the tough spots on your kitchen countertops, appliances, and pots using common items you already have on hand.

Clean Blender Pitcher Easily

After using the blender, rinse the pitcher and fill it about $\frac{1}{4}$ full with warm water. Add a squirt of dish soap and put it back on the blender. Run the blender for 30 seconds. Rinse it out again and you're done!

Clean Cast Iron with Salt

Most cooks know that you should never use soap to clean a cast-iron pan. So how do you clean it? Use salt. Add a couple tablespoons of vegetable oil and 3 tablespoons of salt. Using a paper towel, scour until clean. Then rinse and coat with oil to cure.

Clean Stove Burners without Scrubbing

If you have unsightly grease and spatter cooked onto your burners, you can clean it without scrubbing. Put each burner into a Ziploc bag and add a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of ammonia to each bag. You don't need a lot of ammonia; the fumes will do the hard work. Leave the burners sealed in the bags overnight. The ammonia fumes will dissolve the grease and hardened oil. Take them out of the bags and wipe them clean with a sponge. You will be amazed!

Warning: Do not mix the ammonia with other cleaners, especially bleach. Mixing ammonia with bleach will create toxic fumes.

Eliminate Fridge Odors

If you wrinkle your nose every time you open your fridge, even after you've cleaned it, try lining your

drawers with newspaper. Newspaper will absorb the odors and will keep your produce dry so it can last longer.

Freshen Your Garbage Disposal

If your garbage disposal is not smelling so great, try putting some ice and lemon juice directly down the disposal opening and grind them with running water.

Get Rid of Baked-on Grease

Nix that baked-on grease from your oven and burner pans. Mix ½ cup of baking soda, 4 teaspoons salt and enough hot water to form a paste. Apply the paste to the desired areas and let it sit for 5-10 minutes. Scrub clean with a cloth or sponge.

Sparkling Pans

Clean your pans, stove, stainless steel appliances with baking soda and hydrogen peroxide. Pour ¼ cup of baking soda in a bowl, add enough peroxide to make a thick paste and rub on with a sponge.

Microwave Cleaning Shortcut

The quickest way to clean a microwave oven is to place a couple of wet paper towels inside and nuke them for about 3 minutes. The steam from the towels will soften the grime. Once the paper towels cool down, use them to wipe the oven's interior.

Restore Your Tarnished Silverware

To polish tarnished silverware, boil 8 cups of water and ¼ cup of baking soda. Line a large pan with aluminum foil. Add your silverware to the lined pan and pour the boiling solution over them making sure to cover the silverware completely. Once the water has cooled, remove the items and rinse with cool water. You can now wipe them with a clean cloth and marbly at their beautiful restored shine.

Remove Burnt Smell from Kitchen

If you burned a dish and want to get rid of that awful burnt smell, boil some lemon slices in pan for 5 minutes.

Remove Tarnish with Ketchup

Use ketchup to remove tarnish from copper and brass pots, pans and fixtures. Dab ketchup onto a soft cloth and gently rub item. Rinse with warm water.

Stainless Steel Polisher

Use car wax to keep stainless steel appliances smudge and fingerprint free. Apply a thin coat of car wax to fridge, stove or other appliances and buff clean.

Unclog Your Garbage Disposal

If your garbage disposal is clogged, pour some Coca-Cola down the drain. Wait for it to stop fizzing, and then rinse with hot water. The phosphoric acid in cola breaks down the gunk.



Cleaning the bathroom may be one of your least favorite chores, but it's something that has to be done. This section offers simple tips and techniques to make this task easier for you, so you can keep your bathroom sparkling clean.

Bathtub and Sink Cleaner

Mix one teaspoon of liquid laundry detergent with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of baking soda. Add enough water to form a paste. Use it with a brush or sponge to scour your bathtub and sink surfaces.

Defogging Bathroom Mirrors

Wipe some shaving cream on your mirrors and then wipe clean to keep them from fogging up in cold weather.

Easily Clean Shower Curtains

Soap scum can easily be removed from shower curtains. Put them in the washer with a couple of full size towels. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vinegar and wash in gentle cycle.

Keep Drain Clog Free

To keep your drains clog-free and odorless, combine $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking soda, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup table salt, and 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar. Stir ingredients together thoroughly and pour into drain, and immediately add 1 cup boiling water. Wait a few seconds and then flush with cold water. Do this weekly to keep your drains free of clogs.

Nontoxic Drain Cleaner

Is hair clogging your drain? There's no need to use harsh chemicals for clogged drains. Just pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of baking soda down the drain and then $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white vinegar. Be careful; the two ingredients interact with foaming and fumes, so replace the drain cover loosely. Let the mixture set for about

three hours before running warm water.

Prevent Rust with Nail Polish

Coat the bottom of your shaving-cream can to prevent rust rings on your bathtub ledge.

Remove Rust from Toilet Bowl

Every two to three weeks, sprinkle a packet of lemon Kool-Aid on the sides of the toilet and brush. Leave on the toilet for about one hour and then flush. The citric acid contained in the lemon powder will oxidize the rust.

Remove Hard Water Buildup

To remove unsightly hard water buildup from your shower head, fill a plastic bag with vinegar or fresh lemon juice and place it over shower head. Hold the bag there with a rubber band. The acidity in vinegar or lemon juice will help dissolve the buildup.

Remove Soap Scum

Soap scum is a combination of residue, mineral deposits, and dirt that forms a grimy layer over surfaces. To remove it, pour ½ cup of boiling water, ½ cup of white vinegar, and a few squirts of liquid dish soap. Spray the area generously with this mixture and allow it to soak for about 10 minutes. Scrub clean and rinse well with water. Be careful when using on tile grout since vinegar may affect color.

Streak Free Mirrors

Use coffee filters instead of paper towels to wipe your mirrors for a streak-free shine.

Tub and Shower Cleaner

Fill a spray bottle halfway with white vinegar. Fill the rest of the way with dish soap. Put lid on and shake to mix well. Spray on your tub and shower walls. Allow to sit for about 10 minutes and rinse away. The dish soap and vinegar mixture will totally melt all the gunk, slime, sludge.



Broom Duster

Place a microfiber over a broom's bristles and fasten with a rubber band. Use it to dust hard to reach places like crown molding or high ceiling fans.

Clean a Narrow Vase with Alka-Seltzer

To clean a vase with a narrow neck, fill it halfway with water and drop in two Alka-Seltzer tablets. The baking soda and fizzing action in the Alka-Seltzer will do the dirty work for you.

Dust Repellent

To keep dust off your furniture, mix one 2 tablespoons of liquid fabric softener with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Apply to furniture with a soft cloth and then dry with another cloth. This will repel dust.

Easy Wood Furniture Polish

Mix 6 tablespoons of olive oil with 3 tablespoons of lemon juice. Rub the mixture into the wood surface and let it sit for 15 minutes. Wipe with a soft dry cloth.

Get Rid of Musty Smells

Get rid of musty smells from old luggage or bins with kitty litter. Just pour half a box of kitty litter into the offending piece, close it and leave it in there for several days.

Fabric Softener Sheets for Easy Dusting

Dusting your home is essential. It allows you to have a clean looking home, but it also helps remove pollen, pet dander and other allergens. To save money and time, you can dust with used fabric softener sheets which are electrostatic and attract dust as well as the expensive dusting cloths.

Homemade All Purpose Cleaner

With just a few simple ingredients you can make your own nontoxic all-purpose cleaner at home. Mix ½ gallon of hot water, ½ tablespoon baking soda, and 1 tablespoon dish soap in a spray bottle.

Make Your Own Air Freshener

You don't really need all those scented plug-ins, sprays, or automatic dispensers to keep your home feeling and smelling fresh.

Poke about 10-15 holes on the lid of an old canning jar with a hammer and nail. Place ½ cup of baking soda and a few drops of your favorite essential oil. The baking soda will absorb the unpleasant odors and the essential oil will provide a freshening, welcoming scent. Make several jars and place them in different areas of your home, such as your kitchen cabinets, closets, bathroom, etc.

You can also try to wonderfully clever alternative:

In a pot, add a few drops of your favorite essential oil and a few drops of food coloring to ½ cup water. Bring water to a boil and remove from heat. Dissolve 2 packets of plain gelatin and 2 tablespoons of salt into the hot water and then then add the other ½ cup of cold water. Stir well. Pour into jars and refrigerate. When the gelatin has completely set, cover with lids that have holes punched in them to allow the fragrance to escape. These should last about four weeks if you used enough salt in the recipe to hold off the mold.

Remove Coffee and Tea Stains

If you spill coffee or tea on the rug, you should act quickly. Use a clean rag to blot up the liquid as much as possible and immediately apply club soda to lift the stain.

Refresh Your Old Potpourri

Has your potpourri lost its scent? You can refresh the scent by spritzing it with a little rubbing alcohol or vodka. Pour about ½ cup rubbing alcohol or vodka into a spray bottle. Spritz this over top of potpourri and mix it up a bit. The alcohol will bring back the potpourri's original scent.

Removing Crayon Marks from Walls

Did your child create a work of art on your wall? You'll be able to remove these crayon marks by scrubbing them with toothpaste (not gel) and a cloth. Rinse and dry.

Remove Marker from Walls

Use hair spray or rubbing alcohol to remove magic marker or ink from your walls.

Remove Water Marks from Wood

Did your friend forget to use a coaster and now you have an awful white ring on your wood table? Save the friendship, use mayonnaise to remove the water mark. Rub a tablespoon of mayonnaise on the water ring and let it sit for about 30 minutes. Wipe clean. It will look as if it never happened.

Remove Wine Stains from Carpet

If you're freaking out because you just spilled a glass of red wine on your beige carpet, please don't panic. Club soda and vinegar will help you lift that stain right out, although you'll still have to do a

little scrubbing. On a fresh stain, absorb the extra moisture by blotting it with a clean cloth. Dab it with vinegar to neutralize the red pigment. Then apply some club soda to the stain and let it sit for approximately 30 minutes. Gently blot the area with a wet cloth or sponge and then a dry cloth.



Bright Whites

Do you have dingy whites that you wash time and time again...but never come out bright white anymore? Skip the bleach, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of lemon juice to the wash cycle to brighten up those fading whites.

Dry Clothes Faster

Save energy and dry clothes faster. When you put a load in the dryer, throw in a clean dry towel. The towel will absorb the moisture and the whole load will take much less time to dry.

Get Rid Of Coffee Stains

Although this tip may sound strange, it really works: mix egg yolk and warm water and rub it into the coffee stain. Let it set for 2-3 minutes and watch the stain vanish.

Get Rid of Armpit Stains

To get rid of armpit stain on white shirts or tees, rub them with a mixture of 1 tablespoon dish soap, 3 teaspoons of hydrogen peroxide and 2 tablespoons of baking soda.

Make Your Own Dryer Sheet

Make your own dryer sheets that are both inexpensive and reusable. Cut an old cotton t-shirt or a couple reusable dish cloths into 4 by 4 squares. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of white vinegar with a couple drops of your favorite essential oil. The vinegar will work as a softener and the oil will give your clothes a pleasant long lasting scent. Place the cloths in a sealable jar and pour the mixture over them until they are dampened but not soaked. Keep them in the sealed container.

Refresh and Re-fluff Your Pillows

Stick your flat or lumpy pillows in the dryer with a couple of tennis balls. In addition to the fluffing effect of the bouncing tennis balls, the heat will kill mold and germs.

Remove Stubborn Blood Stains

Use salt to remove blood stains from clothes. Immerse the item in cold water and add lots of salt. Let the stained article soak for about 20 minutes and then rub with laundry soap.

Remove Lipstick Stain

Kiss that red smudge good-bye. Spray a little hairspray on the stain; let it sit for 15 minutes. Dab with a damp cloth to remove and then wash the garment with laundry detergent and a little baking soda.

Remove Permanent Marker from Clothes

If you accidentally got some marker on your favorite shirt, it doesn't mean that your shirt is bound for the trash. Use hairspray or rubbing alcohol to remove marker stains from clothing. Moisten the stain with rubbing alcohol or non-oily hairspray and then blot away at it with a paper towel or clean white rag. You should begin to see the color from the marker transfer from the fabric to the paper towel. After the stain is removed, wash the clothing in the washing machine.

Remove Rust from Clothes

The citric acid in lemon oxidizes rust. To remove rust from clothes, apply some lemon juice on the rust stain and dry the item in the sun. You should then wash the item as usual.

Remove Gunk from Iron

Starch spray, detergent, and fabric softener can build-up on the plate of your iron, which in turn, will stain your fabrics. Rub the iron over with salt and damp warm cloth to remove residue from the soleplate.

Replace Hoodie or Sweatpants String

If you accidentally pulled your hoodie or sweatpants string out, stick the string in a straw and staple it. Use the straw to guide the string and easily loop the string back through.

Set Colors

Place new brightly colored cottons overnight in water with a ¼ cup of salt. Let it soak for several hours. This will help set the colors and keep them bright.

Wash the Washer

To keep your washing machine clean and smelling fresh, fill it with water and two cups of white vinegar. Let it sit for an hour and then run the machine and allow it to through the wash cycle.



Chapter 3: Organizing Solutions

No one is as organized as they wish they could be, so the promise of a more organized home life can be quite uplifting. The following ideas are practical and creative ways to use ordinary household items in unexpected ways to combat clutter and organize your home.

Color Code Your Keys

Tired of sorting through keys trying to figure out the correct one. Tell them apart by color coding them with your favorite nail polish. Just lay them flat and apply a couple of coats to the top of each one. Use contrasting shades for each and have fun with it.

Fabric Drawer Pull

If you have a dresser with a missing drawer pull, try this wonderful fix: thread your favorite ribbon fabric through the holes and tie a knot on the inside to secure it in place.

Grocery Bag Dispenser

If you have grocery bags cluttering the area under your sink, use this clever idea to keep them organized and accessible. Stuff your empty grocery bags into an empty tissue box or plastic wet-wipes container to easily dispense your plastic grocery bags. Keep it under the sink and pull a bag out when you need it.

Ice Cube Tray as Drawer Organizer

Use old ice cube trays or empty egg cartons as drawer organizers for all of your hair accessories, jewelry, or other small odds and ends like buttons and safety pins.

Organize Your Linen Closet

Store bed-linen sets inside one of their own pillowcases and there will be no more hunting through piles to find a match.

Pillow Case Garment Bags

Convert your old pillow cases into garment bags. Cut an inch-wide slit at the center of the stitched end of the pillow case. Slide the hanger hook through the slit and pull the pillow case over the clothing article.

Repurposed Shoe Organizer

Hanging shoe organizers are not just for shoes! You can use these handy organizers for everything from keeping cleaning supplies to styling products and tools.

Use Bowls and Containers

The living room has a lot of different uses, which might make it the hardest area to keep organized. The more loose items you have on surfaces, the more stuff will continue to collect there. To help keep your living room clutter-free, make use of bowls and containers as much as possible. Have decorative bowls, bins, and boxes that double as storage containers for loose items like keys, coins, and pens.

Use a Coat Rack

Hang your necklaces and bracelets within easy reach by draping them on the hooks of a wall-mounted coat rack.



Chapter 4: Self-Pampering Ideas

Everyone needs a little "me" time. Women, especially, need that time to pamper themselves. It doesn't matter if it is late evening, nighttime, or early morning, take a little time to pamper and treat yourself well. Below are my favorite at-home spa tips and tricks for instant rejuvenation and a little self-pampering.

Home skin care is becoming more popular because of the rising prices for professional beauty products and services. Many women are discovering that their kitchens already contain many of the items that can keep their skin clean, healthy, and vibrant.



Commercial beauty products out there are often filled with laboratory-concocted ingredients. Making these products at home is fun and easy. They are also a lot less expensive than commercial products or having a treatment at a spa. Here are a few easy ideas for you to try:

Amazing Oily Skin Scrub Cleanser

Dawn dish soap not only removes grease from dishes, but it is also a mild yet effective grease remover for the skin. Mix a tablespoon of sugar with a few drops of Dawn dish soap and gently scrub the mixture on your face. This is a fantastic alternative to expensive oily-skin cleansers.

Banana Face Mask for Oily Skin

Bananas are another fantastic alternative for your oily skin. The vitamins and minerals will help to clear up blemishes and leave your skin feeling soft and smooth. Mash 1 ripe banana and mix in 1 teaspoon of honey and ½ teaspoon of fresh lemon juice. Apply to your face and let it rest for about 10 minutes. Remove with a warm water and a washcloth.

Chamomile Toner

Use this wonderfully refreshing toner after cleansing. Mix half a cup of witch hazel with 1 cup of brewed chamomile tea. This tea can be used on dry, oily or combination skin. It can be stored for up to 3 days in the refrigerator.

Conditioner Shaving Cream

No need to waste money buying separate shaving products to have smooth sexy legs. Just use your hair conditioner. It will serve to reduce nicks and cuts and leave your legs really smooth.

Cucumber Astringent

Peel and blend a medium cucumber. Strain the juice and remove the pulp. Mix the juice with a few drops of honey and stir. Use cotton balls to dab the mixture onto your face and enjoy the fresh tingly sensation. The cucumber will serve to tone your skin. You can refrigerate it and use for up to 4 days.

Exfoliating Face Scrub

Exfoliating is a very important part of any skin care regime. This facial is mildly exfoliating, anti-bacterial, and moisturizing!

Mix ½ cup of brown sugar with ¼ cup of honey, stirring slowly. Mix in approximately 1 to 2 teaspoons of milk. Use the mixture to gently to exfoliate your skin, being careful to avoid the delicate skin around the eyes. Rinse the mixture off with warm water; be sure to clean extra well around your hairline or some of the honey might dry in sticky clumps.

Fix a Streaky Tan

Use lemon juice to smooth away unevenly applied sunless tanner. Lemon is a natural skin lightener and exfoliator. Sweep a cotton ball soaked in pure lemon juice over streaky areas.

Itchy Scalp Solution

If you suffer from uncomfortable dry flaky scalp, use Listerine instead of expensive medicated shampoos. Dry flaky scalp is usually caused by built-up oils and bacteria. The antiseptic ingredients in Listerine kill the built-up bacteria on the scalp. Dab or spray some Listerine directly on the scalp. Do not use on broken or open skin.

Lip Exfoliator

Mix sugar and Vaseline to form a paste. Massage on lips to exfoliate and smooth dry, peeling lips.

Reduce Eye Puffiness

The skin around your eyes is very thin and very delicate. It must be treated with a gentle touch and great care. Cool temperatures naturally constrict blood vessels, which helps reduce puffiness and dark circles under the eyes. Almost everyone knows that slices of cucumber placed over the eyes for a few minutes will reduce puffiness, however, not everyone knows that using chilled used teabags will work just as well. As an extra benefit, the tannin in the tea also functions as a natural skin-tightener.

Smooth Shiny Legs

Add a little baby oil to your body lotion for super soft and smooth skin with just a touch of non-greasy glimmer.

Treat Blackheads and Oily Skin

Apply a mask of milk of magnesia once a week to keep oily skin and blackheads in check.

Vodka-Sage Astringent

This astringent can be used to help reduce oiliness and acne breakouts. Mix ½ cup of dried sage leaves, ½ cup of vodka and 1 cup of water. Mix the water and sage in a saucepan and simmer for 10 minutes. Let it cool for a few minutes and strain out the sage. Mix the cooled liquid with the vodka in a jar. Dab the mixture with a cotton ball.

Yogurt Acne Treatment

Yogurt is full of vitamins and minerals that are not only healthy for the body but also for the complexion. The acidic nature of yogurt draws oil out from the surface of the skin and kills the

bacteria that cause breakouts of the skin.

Mix a teaspoon of honey and a blob of yogurt. Blend it well. Apply the mixture to your face and wash it off after 10 minutes. You can also mix yogurt and sugar and use it as a scrub. You will love how your skin looks and feels!



Your hair is regularly exposed to harmful elements such as pollution, sunshine, wind, and styling products which cause split ends, coarse texture, and dull color. Deep conditioning treatments can do wonders to improve the texture of your hair. You don't have to spend a lot of money for salon treatments or store-bought products when you can revitalize the soft texture and shine of your hair at home.

Cleansing Rinse for Hair

To remove built-up shampoo residues from your hair, mix enough baking soda and water to form a thick paste and use the mixture instead of shampoo about once week.

Deep Conditioning Hair Mask

Add moisture and manageability to your hair by using this wonderful conditioning mask. Mix a mashed avocado and 2 tablespoons of coconut oil. Massage the mixture to your unwashed hair. Cover with a shower cap and let sit in hair for 20 minutes. Rinse thoroughly with cool water. The conditioning effects will be felt immediately.

Eliminate Static in Hair

Annoyed with static hair? Just rub a dryer sheet over the top of your head to smooth out the fly-aways.

Emergency Nail File

If you have a nail emergency and don't have access to nail file, use a matchbook striker as substitute nail file.

Long-Lasting Nail Polish

Make your nail polish last longer by soaking your fingernails for one minute in 1 cup of warm water and 1 to 2 tablespoons vinegar. When your nails dry, you can paint them as usual. This will remove oils often found on the nails and the nail polish will stick to the surface of the nails and not to the oils.

Quickly Dry Nail Polish

Paint your nails as usual and allow them to air-dry for two minutes. Then submerge your hands in a bowl of ice-cold water for two minutes to freeze-dry your polish, sealing and hardening it quickly.

Protein Hair Treatment

For shiny hair and help with damaged or split ends, whisk together 3 eggs with one tablespoon of lemon juice. Apply to clean damp hair and leave it on for 15 minutes. Rinse with cool water.

Sexy Vacation Hair

If you love the way your hair looks and feels when you go to the beach then you'll love this. Mix some sea salt and water in a spray bottle, add in a little leave-in conditioner and spritz evenly over your hair. This will instantly give you sexy vacation hair!

Shine Enhancing Hair Mask

To restore shine to dull lifeless hair, mix 1 medium sized banana, mashed with a fork, 1 egg, beaten and 4 tablespoons of unflavored yogurt. Apply to hair and leave on for 15 minutes.

Tame the Frizz in a Pinch

Are you out and about and your hair is looking frizzy? Rub some hand lotion through your hair to tame the frizz. Your hair and your hands will appreciate it!

Whiten Nails

After removing dark nail polish, your nails may look stained. Whiten them by soaking them in a solution of hot water, baking soda and hydrogen peroxide.



You do not have to break the bank to enjoy a spa day and have beautiful pampered skin. Here are some refreshing homemade scrubs and body treatments that will bring your dull skin back to life.

Cleansing Detox Bath

You can detox heavy metals and other chemicals from the body with this gentle but effective cleansing detox bath. Start with a clean bathtub and fill it with hot water (as hot as you can comfortably tolerate). Add two cups of Epson Salt to draw out toxins and two cups of baking soda to neutralize the acids of the toxins in the water. Soak for half an hour. Read your favorite book and drink some hot tea (for hydration) while in the tub for an extra relaxing experience.

De-stress by Bathing in the Dark

End a particularly stressful day in a wonderful calming way with a candlelit bath or shower. Light your favorite sweet-smelling candles and turn all the lights off. By creating a quiet and calming ambiance associated with the candles and their smells, you can put yourself into a state of complete relaxation.

Refreshing Sea Salt Scrub

Mix in $\frac{1}{4}$ tablespoon of sea salt and 1 teaspoon of olive oil. Blend well. Next squeeze $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of lemon juice into the mixture. Rub on the skin while you shower, massage and rinse. Not only is slathering this salt and oil scrub all over your body wickedly pleasant and invigorating, but the exfoliating factor also leaves your skin refreshed and vibrant.

Relaxing Bath Salts

After an exhausting day at work, there's nothing better than a nice hot bath enriched with fragrant bath salts. It's quite easy to prepare your own bath salt blend at home. In a large bowl, mix to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sea salt; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Epson salts and 3 tablespoons of baking soda. Add a few drops of essential oils, and combine. The sea salts and Epson salt will soothe tired muscles and reduce inflammation and the baking soda will serve to soften waters and alleviate skin irritation.

Sugar Spice Body Scrub

This luxuriously moisturizing sugar scrub smells good enough to eat. The sugar gently exfoliates and the almond oil and spices leave a subtle scent on the skin. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of brown sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of white sugar, 3 tablespoons of almond oil, and a pinch of ginger and nutmeg.

Vanilla Coconut Sugar Scrub

Coconut oil is subtly fragrant and super moisturizing. This wonderful scrub can practically double as dessert. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of coconut oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of brown sugar and 1 teaspoon of vanilla. Rub on the skin while you shower and rinse.



Chapter 5: Health and Wellness Solutions

When it comes to being healthy and fit, it's the little things you do every day that make a difference. Here are a few tips and ideas to help you stay fit, healthy, and full of energy.



The keys to losing weight and getting fit are eating less and exercising more. Sounds simple enough, but we all know how difficult that can be in the context of real life and its demands. Here are some tips and tricks that can help you stay on track.

Ditch the Diet Soda

Diet sodas may have no calories, but they can kill your weight loss progress. Studies have shown that the artificial sweeteners in diet sodas send messages to your brain that make you want to eat more. Diet sodas can thus lead you to consume more calories and gain weight instead of losing it.

Drink Grape Juice

Everyone knows that, in moderation, red wine has many health benefits. But too much alcohol can offset the benefits. If you find it hard to drink just one glass of wine or are trying to avoid alcohol altogether, try drinking dark grape juice. The resveratrol and flavonoids responsible for much of red wine's health benefits are also found in grape juice. So drink red grape juice as a healthy non-alcoholic alternative and get the health benefits without the alcohol.

Eat More Protein

Diets higher in protein and moderate in carbs have a higher potential for weight loss. Eating enough protein helps preserve muscle mass and encourages fat burning while keeping you feeling full.

Eat Negative Calorie Foods

Some foods actually burn more calories during digestion than they contain. Adding foods like celery, cauliflower, hot chili peppers, and zucchini can be a perfect addition to your weight loss efforts.

Order Children's Portions

When ordering food at restaurants, order from the children's menu as an easy way to reduce calories and get your portion sizes under control.

Switch Plates

Research shows that having a large plate full of food will most likely lead to eating the entire thing. Cut calories by eating off a smaller plate. This optical illusion will trick your brain and will lead to the same feelings of satiety with fewer calories.

Spice Things Up

Spices like cayenne pepper, cinnamon, and ginger help you reach your weight loss goals. Studies show that spices like cayenne pepper, cinnamon, and cloves boost fat metabolism thanks to their ability to reduce insulin and triglyceride responses to food.



Drink through a Straw to Stay Hydrated

If you struggle to drink your 8 glasses of water a day, try slurping through a straw. Straws increase the volume of liquid that you drink because you can't see how much you are drinking.

Doodle to Improve Memory

Research suggests that doodling during a cognitive task helps improve memory because it keeps the brain stimulated. So go ahead and doodle, just be careful what you doodle on.

Drink Coffee to Combat Headache

Caffeine makes pain killers up to 40% more effective. Drink a cup of coffee with your pain killer to get rid of your headache faster.

Ease a Toothache

Apply clove oil on and around the aching tooth to relieve the pain.

Exercise On-the-Go

If you work in an office, try get up at least every hour and go for a walk. If you have an office with stairs, walk or run up and down the stairs every couple of hours. Get your blood flowing and your muscles moving.

Floss to Improve Brain Function

We all know the great benefits of flossing for oral health, but did you know it also helps brain health? Plaque that accumulates between your teeth can trigger an immune response that prevents arteries from getting nutrients to the brain.

Keep the Bugs Away with Homemade Insect Repellent

Insects carry a variety of dangerous diseases, so it's a good idea to keep them as far away from you as possible. You can make your own natural and inexpensive bug repellent at home. Fill a spray bottle with ½ cup of distilled water, ½ cup witch hazel, and 30 to 40 drops of your choice of citronella, clove, tea tree, mint, or eucalyptus essential oil.

Treat Toenail Fungus with Vicks VapoRub

Toenail fungus can be an embarrassing problem. The good news is that you can get rid of it with an easy and cheap treatment: Vicks VapoRub. The ingredients in Vicks VapoRub include camphor, menthol, eucalyptus oil, and thymol. These compounds have antifungal activity. Regularly applying Vicks VapoRub to nails infected with fungus has been shown to reduce and eventually eliminate toenail fungus.

Treat Sunburns with Tea

Gently apply chilled black tea or chamomile tea to the sunburn area to help soothe the skin. The tannins in black tea help soothe skin and speed the body's own recovery mechanism. Chamomile tea has anti-inflammatory properties that can help treat skin affected by sunburns and irritants like poison ivy.

Gargle with Whiskey for a Sore Throat

Add a spoonful of whiskey and a teaspoon of honey to warm water and gargle; the whiskey will help numb the throat and the honey will help coat the throat and soothe irritation.



Chapter 6: Productivity Solutions

We all need a productivity boost now and then. Try these excellent productivity tricks to help you be more productive and accomplish more in less time so you have more time to do the things you enjoy most.

Avoid Perfectionism

It is good to use perfection as a guide, but you must also accept that absolute perfection is unattainable. Perfectionism can inflate your workload and cause you to sink time into work well past the point of diminishing returns. That is time you could have spent working on your next task.

Learn to Single-Task

To improve your productivity, learn to focus on one task at a time. Many of us believe that multi-tasking is something we should strive for, but in reality, it often makes you less efficient due to the need to switch gears for each new task, and then switch back again.

Listen To Audio Books

Are you always beating yourself up for not reading enough? Get more reading done by listening to your books while driving, doing laundry, or washing dishes. It will make those tasks less dull and tedious and might even make you smarter.

Put Yourself in Airplane Mode

Many people find that they can be quite productive during airplane flights. For a few hours, you are away from common distractions like coworkers, TV, email, phone, text messaging and time-sucking web sites. For more productivity, spend a few hours each day in airplane mode: disable the internet on your computer and put your phone in airplane mode.

Reduce Inbox Clutter

If your inbox is cluttered with spam and your important emails are getting lost in the shuffle, you'll want to delete or move the spam out of the way once and for all so you can tackle your real emails. Use the filter function and search "unsubscribe", this will bring up all the marketing emails, you'll then be able delete all or drag them all into a separate folder so you can deal with them later. This will drastically reduce the time you spend sifting through your inbox to find important emails that you actually need to read and address.

Turn Off Instant Messaging

Instant messaging technology is fantastic, but it makes it too easy to be interrupted and interruptions kill productivity. If someone really needs to reach you, they can call, text or email you.

Work Offline

You'll be amazed at how much work you get done if you disconnect your internet connection for a few hours each day. When you do go online, do it for a predetermined amount of time. You will be surprised how productive you can be when you are not being constantly interrupted by emails or distracted by surfing the net or checking blogs and newsletters.



Chapter 7: Travel Solutions

Vacations can really bring you long lasting joy and happiness. The happiness starts from the moment the idea popped into your head; from that moment you feel a wonderful sense of anticipation. The excitement builds as you plan the details of your trip and then there's the joy and exhilaration you feel once you're on vacation. It's bliss! And the sense of joy lasts even after you return home from vacation as you relive your trip and share the happy moments with family and friends. It's no wonder traveling is such a popular thing to do!

If after months of scrimping and saving, you are now planning that long awaited vacation, this section will provide you with some handy tips and ideas that are sure to make your travels more pleasant and fun. These tips and tricks will help you make the most of your experience and save a little cash while you're at it so you can then use it on something much more fun, like a few extra margaritas or rum runners on the beach!



Get Bumped Off Your Flight

Many people dread the possibility of getting bumped from their flight because it's over sold. Getting bumped from a flight isn't always a bad thing. If you are willing to put up with some waiting around and other inconveniences, it can lead to big rewards. If an airline is oversold and they ask for volunteers to take a later flight in exchange for a \$400 travel voucher, getting bumped can really pay. To improve your chances of getting bumped off your next flight, try booking during the busiest business hours, as airlines will often oversell flights during prime business hours. Be sure to add yourself to the volunteer list early.

Pay Lower Hotel Prices

When you make a hotel reservation, it pays to ask the front desk for a lower rate. Always ask, "Is this the lowest price you have?" Many times they will be able find you a lower price or offer you an additional discount.

Pay Less for Souvenirs

Want to bring home souvenirs but don't want to break the bank? Don't buy your souvenirs at the airport! Buy your souvenirs anywhere else but the airport. Souvenirs (and other items) are often priced at 3 to 5 times the going price outside of the airport. Consider going to a grocery store in your destination to buy those specialty chocolates, olive oil, vinegar, or whatever. You will have a more authentic experience and pay closer to what the locals pay. The supermarkets will be much cheaper than the stalls at markets that cater to tourists.

Purchase Packages

You can often save by purchasing a hotel and airline package even if you don't plan on using the hotel portion. Many times the combined airline and hotel price is lower than the airline price alone.

Purchase Ticket at the Right Time

Many travel experts agree that early Wednesday morning is the best time to purchase tickets. Try purchasing your tickets just after midnight when the new fares have been freshly uploaded. Fridays are

considered the worst day. This is when the airlines test higher fares in the hopes that competitors will match the high fares.

Rack Up the Miles

If you want to rack up miles, consider booking flights that have multiple legs. These are usually much cheaper, yet they can earn a lot more miles and get you closer to frequent flyer status. You can easily rack up 20-30% more miles this way.

Save on Baggage Fees

The best thing to do to save on baggage fees is to pack light. But if you absolutely can't pack light, then I suggest you pack more bags. Yes, pack more bags! It's cheaper to pay for a second bag than to pay the fee for one overweight bag. Most major domestic carriers charge around \$25 for the first bag and \$35 for second. That is \$60, it's not cheap, but if you only bring one bag and exceed the limit by a few pounds, you will either have to throw out some of your clothes to lighten the load or pay at a minimum \$90 for the overweight fee.

Save By Shopping Private Sales

Many new websites, including SniqueAway.com, TabletHotels.com, and Jetsetter.com, offer invitation-only flash sales that give you 20% to 60% off hotel packages to travelers. Livingsocial.com offers last-minute getaways at great savings. TripAlertz.com works a little bit like Groupon for travel, the more people who book a deal, the lower the rate.

Save On Your Next Cruise

To save money on your next cruise, you might want to consider booking your next cruise while onboard. Some cruise lines offer significant discounts if you book your next cruise while on your current cruise.

Use a Different Credit Card

When you use your credit card or bank card abroad, many American banks charge a foreign transaction fee of around 3%. If you withdraw cash from ATM, you will also likely be charged an ATM withdrawal fee by the foreign bank and by your own bank. It adds up quickly. There are a few exceptions, Capital One for example, does not charge a foreign transaction fee, and depending on your type of account, will also credit back any ATM fees charged by other banks.



Carry a Silk Travel Blanket for the Plane

Bringing a warm blanket on planes is a good idea, but regular blankets can be bulky. Silk blankets are as warm as regular blankets, but take up far less space. Silk also has incredible temperature regulating properties, keeping you warm when the weather is chilly and cool when the weather is warmer.

Keep Silk Scarves from Wrinkling

Wrap your silk scarves around an empty roll of paper towel. This will keep them from wrinkling. Keep it in place by putting a rubber band on each ends.

Keep Powder Make-Up from Breaking

To keep your pressed powder make-up from cracking or breaking while you travel, place a round cotton pad on top and close the lid. The cotton will serve as cushion protecting the powder.

Pack All Liquids in a Ziploc Bag

Pack all your liquids containers in 1 gallon size Ziploc bags. You never know when a bottle of conditioner, body lotion, sunblock will open and the Ziploc bag will keep your clothes from getting ruined.

Pack a Doorstop

If you are traveling alone to a less than idyllic location and want to feel extra safe while you sleep, wedge a rubber doorstop on the inside of the hotel door and the door will be almost impossible to open from the outside.

Pack a Sarong

Sarongs are lightweight and incredibly versatile so be sure to pack one along. You can use it as a bathing suit cover, as an airplane blanket, picnic blanket, table cloth or even as an emergency towel.

Pack a Shoe Organizer for More Storage

Go to the dollar store and find yourself an over the door shoe organizer. You want a plastic or mesh one. Hang this on the bathroom door in your hotel room or cruise cabin and you'll have tons of

pockets for things like toiletries, air freshener, shoes, belts and more.

Shower Cap Shoe Bag

When traveling, use a disposable shower cap as shoe bag. The shower cap will cover the dirty soles of your shoes and keep them from dirtying the clothes in your suitcase. They take up very little room and are easy and convenient to put on and off.

Split Up Your Stuff

If you are not traveling alone, it's a great idea to pack some of your stuff in your travel companion's bag and vice versa. That way if your bag or your companion's bag is lost, you will each still have some clothing.

Use TSA approved locks

If you want to lock your luggage, be sure to use a TSA-approved one. The TSA reserves the right to access all luggage, so if you use a regular lock for your suitcase, it might be gone when you get your luggage back.



The idea of frazzled nerves, long lines, and lengthy delays at the airport make many travelers shudder. To make your trip to the airport less painful, try these time-saving tips that will help you avoid the usual airport hassles.

Avoid Lost Luggage

Most savvy travelers avoid checking bags for several reasons. One is to avoid the hassles of waiting around at baggage claim and the other is to avoid the risk of lost luggage. Sometimes however, checking your bags is necessary. If you must check bags, avoid flashy high-end luggage. If thieves are out to steal a piece of luggage, it will likely be one these. Although bags do get stolen at airports, the main reason bags get lost is because they were routed to the wrong destination. Be sure to remove old airline destination tags to prevent this from happening.

Carry a Power Splitter

Many airports now provide power outlets or charging stations for your phone or computers. If you are stuck waiting around at the airport and your phone or computer battery is running low, this can be a lifesaver. Often, however (especially during peak travel times) when you need one most, all the outlets are already taken. Take a small power splitter with you, and ask someone if you can share the outlet by using splitter. Most people would agree to do so.

Dress for Security

New regulations require that you take off your shoes before going through security, you might also be asked to take off your coat or sweater, belt, jewelry, and any other items containing metal. To avoid unnecessary delays, wear easily removable shoes and remove your jacket and sweater beforehand.

Check-In Online

Most airlines allow passengers to check in up to 24 hours in advance, select seat assignments, and print boarding passes. Do this in advance to avoid having to wait in lengthy airport check-in lines. If you travel with only carry-on bags, you can go straight to security at the airport.

Check Bags at Curbside

If you must check bags, you shouldn't hesitate to use the curbside baggage check service offered by most airlines. The usual tip of \$1 per bag will spare you a good deal of aggravation and time. By using curbside baggage check-in, you can avoid the long lines at the front desk and go straight to your gate to check in.

Easily Swap Seats

If you are traveling with someone, but your travel companion can't get an adjacent seat, get an aisle seat as far forward as possible. Once everyone is seated, you can ask the person traveling next your to travel companion to swap with you. The forward aisle seats have the highest value for trading with other passengers.

Follow Packing Rules

Know your airline's weight and size restrictions for carry-ons and checked bags. Most people already know that you can't take liquids in containers larger than 3 ounces on your carry-on luggage. Make sure to pack your liquids in your checked luggage in order to avoid delays while going through security. Also, remember not to wrap gifts before you travel. Packages that are gift-wrapped can't be easily identified and security officials will likely have to unwrap them, causing you more delays.

Minimize the Risk of Problems

Try to book tickets with as few stops as possible. Each layover increases the chances of missed flights, delays and lost luggage. Also avoid booking layover stops through cities that have a good chance of weather related delays like Chicago in the winter.

Travel with Recognizable Luggage

If possible, choose luggage that you can easily recognize. If your luggage is black or brown luggage, be sure to affix something colorful on it like a bright label or a ribbon so you can easily spot your bag. You can also purchase colored handle straps for a sleeker look.



Vacations are wonderful times to rejuvenate and restore your soul and body, and there are simple things you can do to help ensure you can enjoy your vacation to the fullest.

Avoid Being a Target

To avoid being a target of crime, do not wear conspicuous clothing or jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of cash. Consider carrying a decoy wallet with cancelled credit cards and a few loose bills in case someone robs or pick pockets you.

Don't Lose Your Travel Companion

If you are traveling abroad with a companion, especially in a busy city, be sure pick a central location to meet up in case you get separated. Nothing is more stressful and anxiety inducing than losing your travel companion in strange city, not having a working cell phone and not knowing how or where to meet up.

Email Your Itinerary to Yourself

Email your flight, hotel reservation and other confirmation numbers to yourself. Also email yourself copies of your passport. If your bags are lost or stolen, you'll be able to retrieve this information from any internet café.

Have a Day with No Plans

Carefully planning your trip in advance is a good idea, however, you should also keep a day open to chill out or walk around without any particular destination in mind. It's simply relaxing.

Keep Mosquitoes Away

When hiking in the mountains or touring around that idyllic Caribbean island, mosquitos are a given. To keep them away, place a dryer sheet in your pocket. The sheet will act as a mosquito repellent and

will even make you smell fresher as you walk or hike.

Learn Some Local Language

When traveling abroad, a few words and phrases in the local language will go a long way to make your trip more pleasant. You may need them to talk to locals that don't know your language. Or you may simply want to use them to impress the people there. At a bare minimum, you should learn: "Please," "Thank you," "Yes," "No," "Excuse me," "Restroom," "One" and "Two."

Tip Sooner

If you are in the good habit of tipping your hotel staff, try introducing yourself to the staff and giving them a small tip at the beginning of your stay. You will likely get a few more chocolates on your pillow, coffee packets and fresh towels.



Avoid the Gasoline Tanker

If you happen to see a gasoline tanker filling the tanks at your local gas station, fill up elsewhere or come back another day. As the station's tanks are being filled, the turbulence can stir up sediment. Sediment in your gas tank can clog fuel filters and fuel injectors, causing poor performance and possibly the need for repairs.

Clear Up Foggy Headlights

If your headlights are looking little foggy, use toothpaste to remove the grime. Apply regular plain toothpaste (not mint gel or extra-whitening paste) with a soft cloth and rub them using circular motion. Rinse the paste off with water and wipe with a clean cloth.

Extend the Life of Wipers

If wipers are beginning to wear down, you can extend their life by rubbing them briskly with sandpaper.

Fix Fine Scratches with Nail Polish

Even small scratches on your car can be quite annoying. Fixing small scratches doesn't have to require expensive body work. You can easily fix small chips and fine scratches with nail polish. First wash and dry the area well. Nail polish is a lacquer and can be used over small car scratches to help cover them and prevent them from rusting. Clear polish won't hide the damage, but it will stop it from getting worse.

Get Better Gas Mileage

Improve your gas mileage by changing your air filter regularly. Your engine sucks in about 14 million gallons of air through the filter every year. Your engine has to work harder when there is reduced air-flow. Check the filter when you change your oil and replace it at least once a year.

Get Unstuck

Place a bag of kitty litter in your trunk in case you get stuck in snow. If you do get stuck, sprinkle some under the tires to help them get traction.

Ice-Proof Your Car Windows

Do you hate waking up early in the morning to scrape the ice off your car windows? To avoid having to do this, fill a spray bottle with three parts vinegar to one part water, and spray on your car windows on cold winter nights. Vinegar contains acetic acid which prevents water from freezing. When you wake up in the morning, your car windows should be free of that hateful icy mess. You can also just spray the mixture directly on the icy windows and watch the ice melt.

Keep Rain off Windshields

Sprinkle some baking soda on a damp cloth and wipe your windshield with it. This will create an invisible shield that will make the raindrops bead and roll off.

Lighten Up Your Key Chain

If your key chain has a dozen keys on it, the weight of the heavy keychain hanging on the ignition, combined with bouncing while you drive, can wear out the tumblers inside the ignition and eventually lead to ignition switch failure. To prevent this from happening, purchase a lightweight key chain that allows you to separate your ignition key from the others. Drive with only the ignition key in your ignition.

Protect Car Door from Garage Walls

If you have a small garage, you might have dinged your car door a time or two by hitting it against the wall. You can prevent this in the future by cutting a pool noodle in half and affixing it horizontally to the wall where the door usually impacts the wall when you open it. The noodle will cushion the impact and prevent damage to your car door.

Remove Car Dent with Plunger

Taking your car to a mechanic, even for a small dent, can be expensive. Some smooth small to medium sized dents can be removed pretty easily with a regular household plunger (creased or complex dents cannot be removed this way). First rinse and clean the dented area well. Firmly attach the mouth of the plunger over the dented area and move it around a little until it seals. Pump the plunger a few times to make sure it's sealed properly and to create good suction. Give the handle a sharp tug. This should pop the metal into its original place. If you are not successful the first time, repeat the process.

Shift into Neutral

To make life for your engine a little easier, shift into neutral while waiting at traffic lights. This technique reduces the amount of heat carried by the cooling system and can increase gas mileage a bit.

Turn on the Heat to Cool Your Engine

Although it is less common with newer cars, even well maintained vehicles can overheat in the right conditions. If your car starts to overheat, the first thing you need to do is turn off the air conditioner and open the windows. Then turn the heater and blower on. Although you'll be really hot, your engine will begin to cool because the heat will be transferred from the engine to the passenger cabin.



Chapter 9: Miscellaneous Hints and Ideas

Here are a few more clever everyday tips and tricks to make your life a little easier.

Amplify your iPhone Speakers

If you love your iPhone, but hate the speakers, pump up the volume by putting your iPhone in a bowl while you play your music. The concave shape of the bowl will amplify the sound.

Buff White Tennis Shoes

Use toothpaste to buff scuff marks from white tennis shoes or sneakers. Most scuff marks will come off quickly and easily.

Clean Gold and Silver Jewelry

Place a sheet of aluminum foil at the bottom of a bowl and fill it with hot water. Dissolve 1 tablespoon of laundry soap. Place your gold or silver jewelry on the aluminum for about 10 seconds.

Clean Up Grease Spills

If you spilled some grease or oil in your garage, pour kitty litter over the spill, grind the kitty litter with your foot to help break it up further. Once the litter absorbs the oil, you can clean up the litter with a broom and dust pan.

DYI Ice Packs

Instead of using frozen peas when you need an icepack, you can easily make your own ice pack at home and have them ready in the freezer for when you need them. In a small Ziploc bag, mix 1 cup of dish soap with a ¼ cup of rubbing alcohol. Squeeze out as much air as possible and seal bag shut. Freeze flat overnight. The alcohol and dish soap mixture will only partially solidify, so it will be the right temperature and pliable.

Extend the Life of Your Razors

After shaving, use an old toothbrush and hot water to give the razor blades a good brushing to remove hair and shaving cream buildup. This will help extend the life of your disposable razors.

Feed Your Plants

To give your plants a nutrient rich treat, use the water left over from cooking your vegetables or spaghetti to water them. Make sure the water cools first.

Fix a Scratched CD or DVD

If the CD or DVD is only lightly scratched, you can just spray it with some white vinegar, rinse under water, and dry with a lint free cloth. If it's heavily scratched, you can try a dab of furniture wax or car polish. Buff the DVD or CD with a lint free cloth and then rinse. Wipe the CD again and let it sit for a while.

Get Rid of Poison Ivy

To get rid of poison from your garden, mix ½ cup of salt with ½ cup of water and 2 tablespoons of

dish soap. Pour over ivy 2 to 3 times to kill them off.

Get Rid of Sticker Residue

To remove a stubborn price sticker residue, paint it with several coats of vinegar, let it sit for five minutes, then wipe away.

Keep Snow from Sticking to Shovel

Apply a couple of thick coats of car wax to shovel. This will help prevent the snow from sticking, making your snow shoveling job a little easier.

Make Your Ladder Slip Resistant

To help make your ladder a little safer and slip resistant, paint the steps of the ladder and sprinkle some fine sand on top before they dry. The sand will stick to the rungs and create an coarse surface thus reducing the chances of slipping.

Melt Ice from Your Driveway

Icy surfaces can be a safety hazard in winter. Dish soap is a cheap and effective alternative to expensive and possibly damaging rock salt. Mix two tablespoons of dish soap with a gallon of hot water and pour it over the icy steps or driveway. The hot water will melt the ice and the dish soap will help prevent the surface from refreezing.

Natural Pest Preventer

Place a clove of garlic in the soil to keep nasty bugs away from your plants.

Open a Jar with a Tight Lid

If you are having trouble opening a tight lid, try hot water. Run the top of the jar under hot water for a minute or so. With a towel, so as not to burn your hands, smoothly twist the cap off. The hot water will warm the metal of the lid, causing it to expand making the jar much easier to open.

Phone Protector

If you're going to the beach, put your smart phone in a clear sandwich bag. The bag will keep the sand off the phone and you'll still be able to use the phone, including the touch screen.

Remove Grease from Tools

Coca Cola may not be good for your teeth, but it can be put to good use cleaning tools and other sticky surfaces. When tools get gummed up with oil and grease, soak them for a few hours in Coca-Cola. It will cut the grease and make them shine.

Remove a Stripped Screw

What to do when you've stripped the screw? A rubber band can help in providing enough grip to remove the screw. Place a wide band rubber band between the screwdriver and the screw, then apply hard, but slow force as you turn the screw driver. The rubber band should fill in the gaps caused by the strip and allow the extraction.

Remove Paint with Oil

Use canola or corn oil to clean oil-based paint off your skin. It works great, washes off with soap and water, and will moisturize your hands, too!

Remove Wall Paper Glue

Use a mixture of vinegar and water to help remove the glue from your old wallpaper.

Revive Your Waterlogged Phone

If your precious iPhone takes an unexpected swim, don't panic, you might be able to save it. You might be able to bring it back to life by placing in a bowl or bag of rice for 2 to 3 days. Be sure to take out the SIM card first.

Soak Old Paint Brushes in Vinegar

Revive old paint brushes by soaking them in vinegar for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, rinse them with soapy hot, water. This will remove the paint and soften the bristles.

Conclusion

I hope that you have enjoyed the hints and ideas contained in this book and that they have helped you save time and money, and made everyday tasks a little easier for you.

Thanks for reading!



About the Author

Naya Lizardo is a professional translator and writer. She is the author of The [FREELANCE TRANSLATION HANDBOOK](#): Guide to Becoming a Professional Freelance Translator, [HEALING FOODS](#): Practical Guide to the Health Benefits and Medicinal Properties of Food, and [REAL CLEVER SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS](#).

Naya has a passion for books, alternative medicine, spicy foods, wine, but most of all, travel. She has lived in the Dominican Republic, Argentina and Taiwan. She now lives in the sunny state of Florida with her husband and family. When she's not hard at work writing or translating, she spends her time reading, enjoying the Florida outdoors, traveling, and caring for her home and family.

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